



ChildCareGroup

Child Care Assistance

Regulated Child Care Provider Manual

Phone: 214-630-5949

Provider Fax: 214.905.2471

Payment and Attendance Fax: 214.905.0422

CCA Web Portal: cca.childcaregroup.org

1420 W. Mockingbird, Suite 300

Dallas, TX 75247

web\www.childcaregroup.org

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1: Overview of the CCA System..... | 4 |
| Chapter 2: Becoming a CCA Provider..... | 6 |
| Chapter 3: Getting Child Care CCA | 10 |
| Chapter 4: Enrolling Children..... | 12 |
| Chapter 5: Enrolling Children with Disabilities..... | 16 |
| Chapter 6: Determining Payment Rates to Providers..... | 20 |
| Chapter 7: Keeping Attendance Records..... | 24 |
| Chapter 8: Collecting Parent Fees and Subsidies..... | 28 |
| Chapter 9: Billing, Reporting, and Paying..... | 30 |
| Chapter 10: Taking Corrective or Adverse Actions with CCA Providers..... | 34 |
| Chapter 11: Helping and Monitoring Providers..... | 38 |
| Chapter 12: Asking Questions and Solving Problems..... | 40 |
| Chapter 13: Improving Quality of Care..... | 42 |

Chapter 1

Overview of the CCA System

The Texas Workforce Commission

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency that provides support services to low income families working to become and remain self-sufficient by moving them from the welfare system into the workforce.

The Child Care Assistance System

Most TWC services that help eligible families with child care are combined into one system called the Child Care Services or Child Care Assistance program.

- TWC contracts with local workforce development boards across the state of Texas to administer child care funds. Each local board serves a county or a group of counties, and there are 28 local boards established in Texas. Dallas County is one service delivery area, and Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is the local board.
- Each local board contracts with community-based agencies across the state to manage the delivery of child care services in their areas. These agencies are referred to as the “contractor” or “CCA contractor”. ChildCareGroup is the child care contractor for Dallas County.
- Each CCA contractor is responsible to the local board for the operation of the child care system in their area, and the local board is in turn responsible to TWC for administration of funds and the child care system.

Child Care Assistance Staff

CCA staff that providers will see or talk to most often are:

- Provider Services Representatives and Inclusion Specialist, who:
 - Visit the child care facility,
 - Maintain and update provider records,
 - Offer program support, training, technical assistance and resources,
 - Help providers comply with CCA requirements, and
 - Help providers access special projects for additional training and equipment
- Early Childhood Mentors, who:
 - Assist providers with the Texas Rising Star program
 - Provide mentoring to site directors and early childhood teachers
 - Assist TRS providers with accessing funding for quality improvement
- Eligibility Staff, who:
 - Help parents determine if they are eligible for services,
 - Educate parents on choosing child care that meets their needs,
 - Enroll CCA children into provider facilities, and
 - Give providers updated information on family eligibility and fees

- Financial Management Staff, who:
Process payments for providers, and
Answer payment questions

Laws, Regulations and Rules Governing the CCA System

Most rules, policies, and procedures in this CCA Provider Manual are based on federal or state laws and regulations. TWC develops rules, policies, and procedures to implement the federal and state laws and regulations. Each local workforce development board then develops policies based on these laws and regulations to meet the needs in the community that they serve. The CCA contractor, in turn, will develop its own operating procedures to carry out all of the rules, policies, and procedures developed by TWC and the local board.

Funding For Child Care

The Federal and Texas state governments provide funding for children referred to providers by CCA.

Categories for families needing child care:

- Choices: parents who are participating in the Choices program, a TWC training program that prepares parents on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to enter the workforce,
- Workforce Applicant: child care is provided for the first year after the parent is approved for TANF benefits, but becomes employed before the TANF benefits begin,
- Transitional: child care is provided to support the employment of parents for the first 12 to 18 months after TANF benefits are discontinued because of the parent's income,
- Child Protective Services: parents receiving services through CPS,
- Foster Care: foster care parents receive assistance with child care expenses for children placed in their care through CPS,
- Food Stamp Employment and Training: workforce program,
- Homeless: parents who meet the definition of homeless according to the McKinney-Vento Act, and
- At Risk : low income parents.

The first three categories, Choices, Workforce Applicant, and Transitional funds are “entitlements” in the state of Texas. It is mandatory that all parents qualifying for these funds receive child care assistance. TWC or its employment and training contractors determine parent eligibility for these categories, and refer the parents to CCA for child care.

Parents who qualify for other funding sources are served as funds are available. In the event that funding is not available, families are placed on the waiting list for funding. Families are placed into care as funds become available and are outreached according to priority group, then date and time of wait list placement.

Chapter 2

Becoming a CCA Provider

Who May Become a CCA Provider

Any child care program licensed or registered may apply to become a CCA provider.

Requirement 1: Licensing and Registration

To be a CCA provider, a child care facility must:

- Have a current permit to operate a licensed child care center, licensed child care home, or registered child care home from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), and
- Not be on corrective or adverse action with TDFPS, or
- Be operated and monitored by the United States Military Services

Requirement 2: Abiding by Program Requirements

To be a CCA provider, a child care facility must:

- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding,
- Agree to abide by the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, and
- Agree to read and follow procedures outlined in this CCA Provider Manual.

Memorandum of Understanding

When a child care provider decides to participate in the CCA program and has submitted all required paperwork, CCA Provider Services staff will complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will:

- Have information needed by the CCA Contractor;
- Explain to providers what they must do;
- Must be signed before CCA can pay for child care services to CCA-referred children;
- Are the basis of payment to providers for child care services provided to CCA-referred children; and
- Include this CCA Provider Manual as part of the agreement.

All regulated child care providers must care for CCA-funded children in a location other than the eligible child's own residence.

Having a Memorandum of Understanding in place does not guarantee that a provider will have children referred by CCA. All referrals made by the CCA Contractor are based on parent choice.

Note: A Board shall not reimburse providers that are debarred from other state or federal programs unless and until the debarment is removed. Providers terminated or disqualified from the Child and Adult Care Food Program are not eligible to participate as a provider or be paid for care.

Changes Effecting the Memorandum of Understanding

Some changes in the way a facility runs will mean that a new Memorandum of Understanding must be implemented, and others simply require CCA staff to update provider records. It is critical that providers notify the CCA Provider Services staff *prior* to any changes as possible, or at least within one day. See “REMEMBER” at the end of this chapter for changes in a facility that must be reported to a CCA Provider Services Representative.

A new MOU will be required when a facility:

- **Changes location**
- **Changes ownership or**
- **Changes TDFPS facility type or permit number**

The MOU, referrals of children, and payment do not automatically transfer to another location or owner. Provider Services staff will have to get updated documents and have the provider sign a new MOU in all of the situations listed above. If DFPS issues a new permit (license or registration) number, then a new record will be created in the CCA database.

Attendance and payment for care will continue under the existing permit number and MOU until:

- A permit to operate has been issued by TDFPS for the new location or owner, and
- The owner or responsible party completes required CCA paperwork,
- A new MOU is signed, and
- The new permit information is verified by phone with TDFPS staff, via the TDFPS public website, or by copy of the new permit.

All paperwork can be gathered and a new MOU signed in advance to help create a smooth transition.



Remember

These changes must be reported to CCA Provider Services Staff:

- A change in the facility name,
- A change in the governing body or corporate status,
- A change in the facility rates or fees,
- A change in hours of operation,
- A change in the holiday schedule,
- A change in the ages of children served,
- A change in the facility owner's address,
- Any change in facility license or registration
- A change in the contact person or director, and
- A change in transportation policies or services.

Changes that cause immediate termination:

- A change in facility ownership,
- A move to a different location,
- A change in EIN or Tax ID, and
- Loss of TDFPS license, registration, or certification status.

In any of these cases, a new Memorandum of Understanding will be issued as soon as all requirements to be a CCA provider are met.

CCA will not reimburse providers that are debarred from other state or federal programs unless and until the debarment is removed.

Chapter 3 Getting Child Care

Parents get help with child care services by contacting CCA to determine if they are eligible for assistance. Eligibility is based on work or training hours, income, and family size. Some parents are referred to CCA by the local workforce development board or TWC employment contractor “Choices staff”, or by TDFPS Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers. These employment staff or caseworkers determine the parent’s eligibility and authorize CCA to provide the child care services.

Parent Choice of Provider

Federal law requires that parents be given a choice of where they want their children to go for care. CCA cannot tell parents where they must take their children for care. Parents who need only part-time or part-day care will choose from providers who offer part-time or part-day care and have it listed on their Memorandum of Understanding.

Parents may choose child care providers who:

- Are licensed or registered with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), or
- Are an eligible relative of the child, and
- Are willing to meet requirements to provide care.

Parents Employed by the Child Care Provider

If a parent is employed by the child care facility, the following rules apply:

Licensed Child Care Centers – the parent cannot be the director, assistant director, or have any ownership interest in the facility and use that child care facility for care of their own children.

Licensed or Registered Child Care Homes – the parent cannot be employed and working at the home during the hours their child is in care.

Termination of Enrollment

The Child Care Contractor may terminate child care services before the eligibility end date due to:

- Permanent loss of work or training and the parent has not resumed activity after 3 months,
- Family income too high, or
- Determination of fraud

Child care providers will receive paperwork for each family that lists a beginning date and/or an end date, which allows the provider to track when care may end or should be updated. When care will be terminating before the scheduled end date the parent and provider will receive notice 15 days in advance.

Note: Providers may terminate a child's enrollment from their program, however, they should first consult with CCA. Staff can assist both the parent and the provider in maintaining the child care placement and continuity of care.

Waiting Lists

Sometimes families who meet eligibility requirements to receive child care must be put on waiting lists due funding not being available. Once a family is placed on the waiting list, they must contact CCA every 60 days in order to remain on the list. Failure to contact CCA by the due date will result in them being removed from the list. Parents can contact CCA by phone or on the web portal.

Chapter 4 Enrolling Children

The Enrollment Process

When a parent is determined to be eligible for child care services, and funds are available for the child's care, CCA Eligibility Staff:

- Reviews what the parent and child's needs are for care,
- Reviews the parent's rights and responsibilities,
- Gives the parent information on types of child care available as well as how to choose quality child care,
- Encourages the parent to visit several child care facilities,
- Tells the parent to let them know when a decision has been made about where to place the child for care.

When the parent notifies the Eligibility Staff that a decision has been made, the staff:

- Contacts the child care provider to be sure that space is available, and if so,
- Verbally authorizes care to start with the provider, and
- Sends the provider Form 2450, Authorization for Child Care Enrollment.

Form 2450 tells the provider:

- The date child care is to begin,
- When the parent's eligibility will end or is due for review,
- The amount of the monthly parent fee,
- The days that the parent is able to use care,
- If care is authorized for part day (1-6 hours) or full day (6-12 hours), and
- Whether transportation is authorized.

The provider must not accept a child unless CCA has called the provider to authorize enrollment. Even if the child is referred by a CPS or TWC caseworker, the provider still must have CCA authorization before accepting the child into care. **Without authorization by CCA, the provider will not be paid for care provided.**

The provider should verify that a child's information shows on the online attendance report within 1-3 days of receiving verbal authorization for care, and the referral information matches the authorization given for days of the week and part/full day. If the website information does not match the authorization given by CCA staff, the provider must contact CCA within 5 days. See Chapter 7 for more information on the attendance system and online referral and attendance reports.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, requires that all individuals, regardless of their disabilities, be allowed access to child care facilities, including registered family homes. See Chapter 5 for additional information on working with children with disabilities.

Providers may limit the number of children enrolled through the CCA program in their facility, and are not required to take referrals that interrupt their business practices applied to the general public (example: part week or part day enrollment).

Providers may not deny a child care referral based on:

- The parent's income status;
- Receipt of public assistance;
- The child's Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Protective Services (CPS) status.

See **“REMEMBER”** at the end of this chapter for what providers must do in the enrollment process.

Provider Policies

Parents must comply with all policies that a provider has, unless the provider's policy is in conflict with CCA or TWC policies.

Most providers have policies that require parents to pay a late fee if they pick children up after the facility closes. Parents of CCA-referred children are expected to comply with provider late pick up policies. **Providers may not:**

- **Charge CCA-referred children a higher late fee than other children are charged, or**
- **Have a different late fee policy for CCA-referred children than for other children.**

If a parent is late in paying the fee assigned by CCA, the provider is able to charge a late fee according to their payment policy.

Units of Child Care Service

CCA purchases child care based upon the “units” of service delivered:

- A unit of service may be a full day or a part day.
- A **full day** unit of service is **6 to 12 hours** of care within a 24-hour period.
- A **part day** unit of service is **less than 6 hours** of care within a 24-hour period.

Children may not be enrolled for more than 1 ½ units of care per day (24 hour period).

Part-Time Care

CCA arranges care based on the time needed to support parents' employment or training. Many parents are employed part-time or do shift work, so **part-time** care, or **less than 5 days** per week may be needed. The child will be enrolled for the type of unit of care needed based on the parent's needs (example: 3 full day units, 4 part day units).

The provider should not accept a part-day referral if that care is not listed on their Memorandum of Understanding. If they wish to add it, the provider must contact Provider Services staff and have it added to their MOU before the referral can be made and the care can be paid for.

Providers must:

- Allow a child referred as part-day to attend up to the full six hours
- Allow a child referred as full-day to attend up to the full twelve hours

Providers must not use the parent's work or training hours to determine how long the child may remain at the facility without being charged a late fee. Care is authorized as either full day or part day based on the parent's needs as listed above. Providers may charge parents a late fee if care is provided beyond the number of hours authorized for full or part day.

Child care facilities that offer extended hour or 24-hour care may request a schedule of need for the week from the parent so that they can plan for staffing. This should be part of their written policies and given to parents.

School-Age Care

School-age children may be enrolled for before and after school care only, summer care only, or full-year care. Providers who offer full-year care for school-age children will need to reserve space for children whose parents need to have them attend for full day care during school holidays unless they are also closed those days.

School-age children who need child care part day on school days and full day on school holidays will have a single referral for the school year and be paid a blended rate for each day of care. The blended rate combines the full day rate with the part day rate as follows:

- Part day rate for 175 days + full day rate for 30 days
- Divided by total number of days during the school session (205)

During the summer months care will be paid at the full day rate if full day care is needed by the family.



Remember

These are things providers do in the enrollment process:

- Accept all children referred by CCA unless:
 - The TDFPS license or registration doesn't include children of that age;
 - Accepting a child would exceed the licensed or registered capacity;
 - The Memorandum of Understanding does not include children of that age, or
 - The Memorandum of Understanding does not include the type of care needed, such as part day or weekend care.
- Accept only those children CCA has authorized for care by telephone followed by Form 2450, Child Care Assistance Authorization for Child Care Enrollment.
- Provide parents with written policies and procedures for the child care program.
- Not enroll children for more than 18 hours of care in a 24-hour period. Families who need extended care to cover work/training hours may have a full day and part day referral for the same day.
- Verify enrollment information on the CCAA website after care has been authorized.

Chapter 5

Enrolling Children with Disabilities

Policies for Services to Children with Disabilities

CCA policies and procedures for serving children with disabilities are to:

- Create supportive environments for children and their families, and
- Provide support to providers.

The ADA and CCA Providers

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, that went into effect in 1992 requires public accommodations, including licensed child care centers and homes, and registered child care homes, to ensure access for all individuals regardless of disabilities. All child care programs must comply with this law by accepting children with disabilities into their facility, and by making it possible for parents with disabilities to access child care facilities.

Care for children with disabilities cannot be discontinued or refused, unless the care would fundamentally alter the child care facility's programming, or presents an undue burden to the provider. Providers who wish to discontinue or refuse care for a child with a disability should:

- Prepare to justify their enrollment decisions if their decisions are challenged,
- Contact CCA before refusing or discontinuing care, and
- Document in writing any inability to provide adequately for a child's needs or safety, which may include: accommodations that have been tried, accommodations that are considered necessary, and reasons the necessary accommodations were unsuccessful or not readily achievable.

Placing Children with Disabilities

Parents of children with disabilities have the same right to parent choice as other parents, and CCA staff will follow the same referral process. If parents request specialized care, Inclusion Services can assist the parent in exploring care options and finding a facility to best meet their needs and support their child. Parents may choose to place children according to location or convenience, even if the provider chosen does not have experience caring for children with disabilities.

CCA Inclusion staff are dedicated to working with providers who care for children with disabilities as well as the parents of the children. Support for child care providers and families of children with disabilities or delays is available through

- Referrals to other community agencies
- Training, consulting, or modeling
- Activity ideas
- Enhanced rates to help pay for additional staff
- Observations and recommendations
- Collaborative planning meetings

The Inclusion Services Process

When parents disclose that their child has a disability, CCA staff will ask the parents to complete paperwork authorizing CCA staff to observe the child in the child care setting. Current documentation of the child's disability and any needs or recommendations from specialists working with the child will also be requested.

Inclusion staff will schedule a time to observe the child at the provider facility in order to develop an inclusion plan. The inclusion plan will detail specific goals for the child's development that can be incorporated into the provider's daily plans and routines. Inclusion staff will schedule a planning meeting with provider staff, the parents, and any other professionals working with the child. All will have input on challenges or issues and suggestions to meet the child's needs, prioritize goals, consider adaptive materials or modifications, and staff or parent training or resources that may be helpful.

Inclusion staff will follow up with the provider to give assistance on implementing activities and other items on the inclusion plan, ensure that the child's plan is being followed, and make any changes necessary.

Inclusion staff may also provide assistance to any CCA-contracted facility which is attempting to make accommodations, adaptations, or modifications for children with disabilities in their programs.

Confidentiality

All information providers have about children with disabilities is confidential. Information about children with disabilities cannot be given to anyone who does not directly work with the child or supervise someone who does, either in writing or verbally, without permission from the parent. Provider staff working directly with children with disabilities must learn all they can about the children, however caregivers must not share confidential information with:

- Caregiver staff who do not work with the children with disabilities,
- Other providers,
- Other parents, or
- Visitors.

Caring for Children with Disabilities

Information on caring for children with disabilities is available to help providers who have children with disabilities enrolled in their facilities. Information and assistance are available on:

- Working with parents of children with disabilities,
- Getting a child settled into the facility,
- How CCA will help,
- How to help develop and follow individualized inclusion plans,
- Getting adaptive equipment,
- Determining if more help is needed,
- Finding community resources,
- What to do if a parent has a disability, and

- What to do if caregivers don't think they can meet the child's needs.

Inclusion Assistance Rates

Additional reimbursement is available when extra adult assistance is needed for the child with a disability, beyond what is typical for the child's chronological age. The parent must initiate the process by requesting their provider receive the additional reimbursement, and be willing to participate in the inclusion program.

The Inclusion Specialist will help the parent and provider with this process. The additional reimbursement rate is typically 190% of the provider's CCA reimbursement rate for the child's age.

The inclusion assistance rate may be used:

- To help pay for extra staff, or
- For additional wages to a current staff member who has special skills necessary to help the child with a disability, or is willing to receive training to attain these skills in a timely manner.

The provider must have the adult identified and hired **before** the inclusion assistance rate can begin. Inclusion assistance may not be used to pay for counseling, therapy, or medical services. These services may be provided through cooperating agencies and are not considered additional adult assistance needed to include the child in the facility's program.

Resources

Most communities have resources available to parents of children with disabilities, and most of the resources are available to providers. CCA will assist providers in locating local resources, which may include:

- State agencies;
- Federal agencies;
- Local, state, and national associations for persons with disabilities;
- Parent support groups and organizations; and
- Educational services.



Remember

These things must be done when children with disabilities are enrolled:

- Develop and follow a child's inclusion plan.
- Contact the CCA Inclusion Specialist if a child's disability status changes. For example, when a child no longer attends a special education class.
- Use inclusion assistance funds as intended.
- Maintain confidentiality about children's conditions.
- Contact the CCA Eligibility Staff or Inclusion Specialist if there are problems with a placement.

Chapter 6

Determining Payment Rates to Providers

Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas sets the maximum rates that providers can be reimbursed for services to CCA-referred children according to:

- Federal and state laws and regulations, and
- Market rate surveys.

Maximum reimbursement rates are based on the following:

- Type of child care facility: licensed center, licensed home, or registered home;
- Ages of children served: infant (0-17 months), toddler (18-35 months), preschool (3-5 years), and school (6-12 years); and
- Full-day or part-day care

Provider Payment Rates

Actual payment rates for individual providers are set when the Memorandum of Understanding is signed, and are based upon the documentation of rates given to CCA by the provider.

Provider reimbursement rates are based on the provider's published rates, or what is charged to the public, and prorated to a daily rate. A copy of the provider's published rates must be provided in order to establish reimbursement rates. The provider must also submit any other fees normally required to be paid by parents (registration, uniforms, activities, etc.). These fees must be included in the CCA rates and cannot be charged to the parent by the provider.

The daily rates are calculated using the following steps:

1. Weekly rates are divided by 5; monthly rates are divided by 4.33 to get a weekly amount, then by 5 to get a daily rate.
2. All other fees that are required to be paid by parents as part of the regular program will also be prorated to a daily rate. This includes fees for registration/enrollment, supplies, uniforms/t-shirts, insurance, and activities or field trips. All amounts are totaled for the year, then divided by 260 to get a daily rate.
3. The daily rate for other fees is then added to the daily rate for care to get one daily rate for each age group.
4. If the provider has more than one rate for any of the four age groups listed above, the provider's rates for care will be averaged to come up with one rate.

Providers will not be paid more than the CCA maximum reimbursement rate for child care. Providers cannot require CCA-referred parents to make up the difference between the providers' published rates and the CCA maximum rates. The provider may not charge CCA a higher rate than what the public is charged.

When Providers Change Their Rates

If providers change their published rates they must send written documentation of the new rates to Provider Services. A new Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared that shows the new rates. The new rates will be effective the first of the month *after* the MOU with the new rates has been signed. Providers should send new rate information to Provider Services at least two weeks prior to the change to ensure that updates are made and the MOU is completed and signed as needed.

Provider Reimbursement for Transportation

When providers transport children, CCA will reimburse providers as follows:

- If providers charge a separate transportation fee, CCA will pay the transportation fee for CCA-referred children who have been authorized for transportation
- **The combined total for care plus transportation can not be more than the CCA maximum reimbursement rates**

School-Age Care

School-age children who need child care Monday-Friday, part day care on school days and full day care on school holidays will have a single referral for the school year and be paid a blended rate for each day of care. The blended rate combines the full day rate with the part day rate as follows:

- Part day rate for 175 days + full day rate for 30 days
- Divided by total number of days during the school session (205)

During the summer months care will be paid at the full day rate if full day care is needed by the family.



Remember

- A single rate for full-day and a single rate for part-day care are established for each age category that applies to the facility.
- Providers must include all fees that are normally charged to parents over the course of a year to CCA so that those fees are included in the daily reimbursement rates. Those fees cannot be charged to the parent.
- CCA may not be charged a higher rate than public paying parents are charged.
- Providers may not be reimbursed more than the established maximum rates.
- CCA-referred parents cannot be required to make up any difference between the provider's published rate and the CCA maximum rate.
- If a separate rate is charged for transportation, the provider is reimbursed only for transportation that is authorized by CCA for the referred child.
- Care for school-age children receiving before and/or after school care as well as holiday care is paid at a blended rate during the school year.

Chapter 7

Keeping Attendance Records

Recording Attendance of CCA-Referred Children

Parents have the responsibility of recording attendance of their children daily through the Child Care Attendance Automation System, or CCAA. Each parent is issued an attendance card, and the parent can have cards issued for up to 3 other individuals age 16 or older. If a parent of the child is under age 16, then they may be issued a card. The parent or another person designated by the parent will record daily attendance and absences. If the child care provider is a licensed center, attendance will be recorded using a POS (Point of Service) machine that is provided by the Texas Workforce Commission. If the child care provider is a licensed or registered home, attendance will be recorded using the provider's telephone. The following steps are completed to record the daily attendance:

| | |
|--|--|
| Parent uses phone to record drop off/ pick up: *Call 1-866-960-6496 and enter card number *Enter PIN *Enter Child Number *Choose the action (check-in, check-out, etc.) etc.) Normal check in on system is 90 seconds to start; approximately 20 seconds with experience | Parent uses POS to record drop off/ pick up: *Swipe card *Enter PIN *Enter Child Number *Choose the action (check-in, check-out, etc.) Normal check in takes 30 seconds |
|--|--|

The system will check the following:

- Does the child have an active referral through CCA?
- Is this the correct provider?
- Is care authorized for this day?
- Is the transaction coming from the provider's phone number?
- Does the entry make sense? (Example - on a check-in, is the child already checked in?)

If any of these checks fail, the entry is rejected and the parent will know immediately

| |
|---|
| <p>Note: The provider <u>may not</u> record attendance information in the CCAA system for the parent, and the provider <u>cannot</u> be an additional attendance card holder. Violation of this rule can result in termination of child care services for the parent, and termination from the program for the provider.</p> |
|---|

When Children Are Absent:

The CCAA system has an absence transaction. Absences work like attendance, except:

- The system will ask for an absence reason – illness, court-ordered visit, or general absence
- Parents can call in the absence from any phone, anywhere
- Child care center families can either record the absences on the POS device, or call it in from any phone

- Absences can be reported up to 3 days in advance and up to 6 calendar days following the absence

When a parent does not record attendance with their card, the day will be counted as an absence.

Absences of CCA-Referred Children

Children are allowed a total of 65 absences a year based on their family eligibility dates. Absences follow the child, meaning that if a child is referred to more than one child care provider during the year, absences at each facility accrue toward the total allowed. Absences are tracked by CCA, and CCA sends parents a notice when a child's absences reach 20, 40, and 60. When they reach 65 or more days a notice is sent to let the parent know that the child's care may be terminated and gives them the opportunity to provide documentation to support absences due to extenuating circumstances.

Exceptions. What if...

- ***The parent forgets to record attendance?*** The parent can go back 7 calendar days to fill in any missing transactions (today + 6 days back).
- ***The parent is not available to record an absence at the provider's facility?*** Absence reporting can be done by phone from anywhere. The parent can also go back 7 calendar days (today + 6 days back) to report the absence once they have returned to care, and can report future absences up to 3 days in advance
- ***The parent takes their school age child to school, then the provider picks them up in the afternoon. How does the check in get entered?*** When the parent picks the child up at the end of the day, they will enter a previous check in for that afternoon, then enter a check out.
- ***The parent is not available to record attendance due to the provider giving home transportation services?*** If the provider gives transportation to and from home, the parent or one of their designated card holders will have to come by the provider's home at least weekly to record attendance. Centers who provide home transportation services may request additional POS machines to carry on the vans and allow parents to record attendance at pick up and drop off.
- ***There is a problem with the POS or CCAA phone system?*** The provider should call the Help Desk to get assistance, and should also report the problem to CCA. When it is fixed, the parent can go back 7 calendar days (today + 6 days back) to fill in any missing transactions.

Reviewing Attendance Information

The CCAA system has a provider website that will allow providers to view:

- Provider name, address, contact information, and scheduled holidays
- Referral information for all CCA children enrolled in the child care facility
- Activity for attendance recording by child
- Transactions (check-in, check-out, etc.) for all children
- Daily recorded attendance and missing attendance information for all children

The website can be found at: www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com

Providers will log in with their DFPS facility number. The password for the first visit to the site will be the provider's zip code. After the initial log in the system will have the provider set up a new password. Please refer to the User Manual posted on the CCAA website for additional information on reports in the system.

All attendance information for the week should be recorded in the CCAA system by the parent by the end of each week.

CCA providers should review attendance information entered by the parents at least every 5 calendar days to ensure attendance is recorded. If a parent fails to report attendance or absences in the CCAA system, those days are recorded as absences in the payment system.

If a parent is not able to record attendance information due to not having an attendance card, or their attempts to record were declined, they should report that to CCA within 3 days. If a parent is not able to record attendance because there of an issue with the system (POS, phone/internet connection) the provider should report that to CCA within the same week. Providers may report days present on behalf of the parent so that they are not counted as absences as long as the issue (no card or system issue) has been reported to CCA. Providers can report days present within 5 calendar days only.

Suspension of Enrollment

Sometimes a child must be absent from care for an extended period of time. This can happen when:

- The child must spend time with a parent on a court-ordered visit or as part of a custody agreement
- A parent has a break in employment (example: parent works for a school district)
- A parent has a break in school and is not working during the break (examples: teen parents, parents enrolled in college)

A parent can request a suspension so that absences will not accumulate. The Eligibility Staff will:

- Terminate the child's enrollment with the provider, and
- Place the child on suspended enrollment.

The provider is not paid for the period of time the child is on suspended enrollment and may enroll another child in that space. When the suspension period is over, the child will be re-enrolled into the CCA program and may be placed with the original provider if space is available, or with another provider. Providers are not required to hold spaces for children that are on a suspension.



Remember

- Parents must record attendance and absences through the CCAA system for each day of enrollment
- Providers may not record attendance information for parents, and may not be an additional card holder for the family
- Absences are recorded by the parent with a reason for the absence
- Absences can be recorded from any phone, and can be recorded for up to 3 days in advance
- Attendance and absences can be recorded for the current day as well as the 6 previous calendar days (weekends included)
- Days not recorded by the parent will count as absences
- Children can have no more than 65 absences per year
- All providers should review attendance information on the CCAA website at least every 5 days
- If a child needs to be out of care for an extended period, the parent should request a suspension of care so that absences do not accumulate

Chapter 8

Collecting Parent Fees and Subsidies

Who Pays Parent Fees

Federal law and state regulations say that many parents must pay part of the cost of their child care, even when they are getting help from TWC. Parent fees are calculated according to the family's *gross* monthly income. Eligibility staff will tell providers if parents have to pay fees and how much the fees are.

Collecting Parent Fees

Providers **must** collect parent fees, and collection of these fees is the sole responsibility of the provider. Each provider should have a clear, written policy that explains when payment is due, and consequences for non-payment including fees and termination from the facility. The policy should be given to parents at the time of enrollment. Providers keep the fees they collect, and the amount of the assessed parent fees is deducted from the CCA reimbursement to the provider.

Providers must collect parent fees according to their written policies. Collection of fees should be documented and must be paid **before** child care services are provided.

Parents must pay their parent fees and subsidies even when:

- Children are scheduled to attend but do not attend, and
- The parent takes vacation days.

Deduction of parent fees from provider reimbursement is discussed in Chapter 9.

See “**REMEMBER**” at the end of this chapter for requirements on collecting parent fees.

Reduction of Parent Fees

Parent fees may be lowered temporarily when parents have unusual circumstances. Only the Eligibility staff can lower parent fees. Providers may **not** lower fees, but they can recommend that a parent contact CCA and ask for a fee reduction.

Eligibility staff will notify providers when parent fees have been reduced and Financial Management staff will adjust the reimbursement to the provider for that child.

When Parents Do Not Pay Their Fees

Collection of the parent fees is the responsibility of the provider, and CCA will not reimburse for any uncollected fees. The provider should follow their written policy, which can include assessing a late fee, suspending care, and ending care with the facility.



Remember

Collect parent fees as required:

- Have a clear, written policy
- Fees are collected before child care services are provided.
- The amount collected from each parent should be documented.
- Providers should give parents receipts for fees they pay.
- Providers should keep copies payment records.

Chapter 9

Processing Payments for Child Care

All parents record attendance information through the CCAA system. The information is then automatically sent to CCA on a weekly basis to process for payment to the provider.

Payments are processed (payment calculated and statement prepared) every 2 weeks, and payments are typically released to providers within 5 business days of processing.

Payment to CCA Providers

There are many steps that take place between the time the attendance information is received and the time the provider receives payment for the services. Providers are paid for all days the child is enrolled, whether present or absent. All assigned parent fees that the provider should collect are deducted from the CCA reimbursement to the provider.

Payment for Days Not Recorded by Parents

Any days not recorded by parents will be automatically paid to the provider and counted as absences. If the parent is unable to record, the provider may report days present within 5 calendar days (weekends included) as long as a report has been made by the parent (card issue) or provider (POS or phone/internet issue).

All payments to providers are made by direct deposit to a checking account in the business name, or to a debit card issued to the provider. No paper checks are issued. CCA publishes a yearly schedule for payment processing and estimated payment release dates.

Payment Summaries

Providers should be sure to review the Payment Summary for each period as soon as possible after receiving it. If an error is found, the provider should contact the Financial Management unit within 15 days of receiving the payment summary.

Providers will be required to refund any payments that they are not entitled to, including:

- Overpayments,
- Duplicate payments, or
- Payments made in error.

Accepting payment for services not actually provided is fraud. Providers and parents will be referred to the Texas Workforce Commission in cases where it is suspected that a fraudulent claim has been made.

This includes:

- Allowing parents to record children as present when they were not in care,
- Allowing attendance information to be recorded or recording the information for children after care has been terminated by CCA
- Allowing attendance information to be recorded or recording the information for children after the parent has withdrawn the child from care

Record Keeping Requirements

Providers must keep records while a CCA-referred child is in their care. After a CCA referred child is no longer coming to the facility, it is recommended that providers keep:

- Financial documents and supporting documents such as attendance records and receipts for parent fees, and
- Any other records having to do with financial claims.

Access to Records

Providers must allow reasonable access to their records and must provide copies on request to people who are authorized to see records and documents. The access only has to be during regular business hours. People authorized to see provider records are:

- CCA Staff or any entity contracted by CCA to conduct on site monitoring,
- Local Board (Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas) staff or any entity contracted to conduct monitoring,
- TWC staff,
- Representatives of the State Attorney General's office, and
- Representatives of Federal government offices with responsibility for managing and auditing federal and state child care programs.



Remember

Follow These Guidelines

- Parents must record daily attendance in the CCAA system.
- Attendance information can only be submitted for children authorized by CCA and for only the period covered by the child's enrollment.
- Providers are paid for all days children are enrolled, whether present or absent
- Records and documentation that have anything to do with attendance or parent fee payments are kept on file while a child is in care.
- Days when a child is not authorized for care will be blank on the attendance report.

Providers can contact the Financial Management staff for payment questions at 214-630-5949 or on the cca web portal – cca.childcaregroup.org.

Chapter 10

Taking Corrective or Adverse Actions with CCA Providers

Complying with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Providers must comply with all the terms of the MOU and follow procedures in this CCA Provider Manual. CCA will take corrective or adverse action with providers who do not comply as required.

A copy of the MOU is given to all providers once all required paperwork is received, and the MOU is signed and in effect.

Service Improvement Agreements

CCA Provider Services staff will negotiate Service Improvement Agreements (SIA) for providers if they:

- Do not meet the terms of the MOU.
- Do not follow the procedures in this CCA Provider Manual.

Service Improvement Agreements will:

- State the problem,
- Explain to providers what improvements must be made,
- List any training requirements,
- List ways for the provider to work on improvements,
- Tell what CCA staff will do to help providers make the improvements, including any technical assistance to be provided by CCA,
- Set time limits for making improvements, and
- List the results of not making the improvements.

Provider services staff will discuss SIA's with providers and will offer what help is needed for providers to correct the problems or make the improvements. SIA's must be signed by the provider and Provider Services staff. If a serious problem happens with a provider, CCA can take immediate action instead of writing a Service Improvement Agreement.

Adverse Action by CCA

Consequences for serious problems (in which immediate action may be taken by CCA), noncompliance with policy, or failure to make needed improvements as defined by a Service Improvement Agreement by providers might include the following:

- Temporarily withholding payment,
- Permanently withholding payment,
- Discontinuing referral of children to the provider,
- Recouping funds from the provider.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be terminated in the following instances:

- Change of ownership
- Change of location
- Revocation or suspension of a license or registration by TDFPS
- Provider is terminated and/or disqualified from participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Noncompliance with Child Care Automated Attendance Requirements

If a provider is found to be in possession of attendance cards and/or PIN information, the following steps will be taken:

- A Service Improvement Agreement will be issued for a period of 3 to 12 months;
- No placements of children will be authorized during the SIA period;
- Unannounced monitoring visits will be conducted by CCA staff monthly to observe parents recording attendance and review provider compliance with requirements;
- Parents will be required to attend a training regarding the CCAA system in order to continue to receive child care services; and
- CCA may require supporting documentation for any attendance information submitted by the provider, including but not limited to daily logs with parent signatures indicating drop off and pick up of children.

Corrective and Adverse Action by TDFPS

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) will notify TWC when a facility is placed on evaluation status, probationary status, or adverse action. In all cases CCA staff will contact both the provider and parents of children enrolled through CCA after receiving notice of the action through the Texas Workforce Commission. The following table summarizes the actions to be taken by CCA when a child care provider has been placed on corrective or adverse action with DFPS. More detailed information follows.

| Status | Provider Notified | Parents Notified in Writing | New Enrollments are Stopped? | Currently Enrolled Children are Removed? | Provider is Eligible to Receive TRS/TSR Rates? |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Corrective Action/ Evaluation Status | Within 2 business days | Within 5 business days | No | No | No |
| Corrective Action/ Probation Status | Within 2 business days | Within 5 business days | Yes | No | No |
| Adverse Action | Within 1 business days | Within 2 business days | Yes | Yes – within 5 business days | No |

For providers placed on Evaluation Status:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and giving them the option to remain in care or transfer
- Enrollment of new children may continue
- If the provider is receiving a higher reimbursement rate due to Texas Rising Star certification or TSR participation, the rates will be lowered and the standard maximum rates will be applied

For providers placed on Probation Status:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and giving them the option to remain in care or transfer
- No new children may be enrolled through CCA
- If the provider is receiving a higher reimbursement rate due to Texas Rising Star certification or TSR participation, the rates will be lowered and the standard maximum rates will be applied

For providers under Adverse Action:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and requiring them to transfer to another child care provider within 5 days
- All children are required to transfer
- **No new children may be enrolled through CCA**

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Everyone in Texas is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If the suspected abuse or neglect happens while the child is in care with a provider, the TDFPS Child Care Licensing or a local or state law enforcement agency must be notified. CCA staff will notify TDFPS if they receive a complaint against a provider.

If a provider suspects abuse or neglect of a child is happening away from the facility, the individual who suspects the abuse or neglect must immediately report the suspicion to TDFPS Child Protective Services.

Reasons Providers Could Be Prosecuted

Providers may be prosecuted under applicable federal or state laws for:

- False claims for payment,
- False statements, or
- False documents.

Provider representatives should carefully review all documents that they sign and note that their signature is considered to be confirmation of the information included on the document. This includes information contained on the Memorandum of Understanding and any other paperwork submitted.

CCA is required to investigate all allegations of fraud and report the findings to Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas. CCA staff may make unannounced visits to provider facilities to investigate allegations, review documentation, and verify attendance of CCA children.

Chapter 11

Helping and Monitoring Providers

How CCA Staff Help Providers

The CCA Contractor serves as a resource for providers and will provide help that fits the provider's situation and needs. CCA staff will help providers understand and comply with requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding and this CCA Provider Manual. Providers who choose to become certified as Texas Rising Star providers will receive assistance in that process.

Providers may ask for help with program problems. Provider Services staff may offer help to providers when problems are observed, and Provider Services staff may also develop Service Improvement Agreements to help providers to correct problems.

Visits to Provider Facilities

Providers who are certified as Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers will receive visits to renew their TRS certification, complete annual monitoring, and provide mentoring and technical support to meet TRS criteria.

If a provider has a child with disabilities enrolled, an Inclusion Specialist will visit:

- Every six months to monitor implementation of the child's Inclusion Plan, and
- Quarterly if the provider receives the inclusion assistance rate.

Providers must allow Local Board, Texas Workforce Commission, or other state or federal authorities to conduct program and fiscal audits as requested. This will be done during regular business hours.

The TDFPS Licensing division monitors provider compliance with licensing or registration standards. **CCA staff, Board staff, or TWC staff who observe noncompliance with TDFPS minimum standards are required to report the noncompliance to TDFPS licensing.**

Chapter 12

Asking Questions and Solving Problems

Questions About Policies

When providers have questions about the Memorandum or Understanding or about any of the policies outlined in this CCA Provider Manual, the provider should contact CCA Provider Services staff. CCA staff will contact the Local Board/Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas for additional information when necessary.

Waivers

Sometimes a provider may not be able to comply with a rule or procedure. If the provider can meet the intent of the rule or procedure, the provider may ask CCA if a waiver is possible. A waiver could allow the provider to:

- Meet the requirements in a different way, or
- Have the rule or procedure set aside because of extenuating circumstances.

Providers should send written requests for waivers to CCA. CCA will forward waiver requests to the Local Board/ Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas to see whether they can be approved. CCA staff will notify providers whether or not waivers are approved.

Complaints from Parents regarding Providers

Providers may receive complaints from parents about provider care or policies. Most complaints can be handled directly by providers and the parents. If providers and parents cannot work out the problems and the complaints cannot be resolved, providers should refer parents to CCA.

Occasionally parents will report complaints to CCA staff regarding services provided by the provider. If the complaint involves a possible noncompliance to TDFPS minimum standards, then CCA staff are required to report the complaint to licensing staff for follow up. The parent is given the information to contact TDFPS to report the complaint as well.

Sometimes parents want to move children from a facility when they have problems with the provider. If this happens, the CCA staff will make effort to find out the cause of the problem and try to assist the parent with solving the problem rather than move the child. If the problems between the parent and the provider cannot be resolved, then the family will be transferred to another facility.

It is the goal of CCA to assist parents in making the best choices for their children and for their needs as a family. Parents are encouraged to take their time in selecting child care so that their choice is a good fit and children remain in care at the facility long term. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the provider staff on a regular basis so that when concerns arise, they are comfortable in addressing them. CCA staff can serve as a mediator between the parent and provider; however, direct communication between the parent and provider is always encouraged first.

Complaints from Parents or Providers regarding CCA

Providing a high level of service to customers is extremely important. When a provider or parent has a complaint regarding the level of service received or the outcome of an issue that needed resolution, it is important to:

- Speak with the Supervisor in charge. The issue will be investigated and followed up.

If the need still has not been met:

- Speak with the Manager of the department. The issue will be further investigated and followed up as requested.

Following this step, if the need still has not been met:

- Contact the CCA Director

Providers and parents have the right to speak with Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas staff when issues cannot be resolved with the staff at ChildCareGroup. Any feedback is appreciated, and staff would like the opportunity to resolve any issues directly.

Provider Appeals of Decisions made by CCA or Action Taken

If providers do not agree with a decision or action taken by CCA, they should first try to review the situation with CCA management staff. If the provider is not satisfied with results, CCA management staff will consult with Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas to review the situation. The provider may request a meeting to resolve the situation.

Chapter 13

Improving Quality of Care

Texas Rising Star Certification

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's child care program. TRS certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-star, Three-star, and Four-star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-star level.

Providers that voluntarily achieve TRS certification offer quality care that exceeds the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards and are in a better position to contribute to the early development of children. As providers progress through the levels of TRS certification, they contribute progressively more to the development of the children they serve on a daily basis.

The Texas Rising Star program organizes measures into five categories:

- Category 1: Director and Staff Qualifications and Training
- Category 2: Caregiver-Child Interactions
- Category 3: Curriculum
- Category 4: Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Activities
- Category 5: Parent Education and Involvement

For more information on the TRS program, the certification guidelines, self-assessment tools, and the application process please visit the Texas Rising Star website at: www.texasrisingstar.org.

Every parent in the CCA program or on the waiting list will receive a Consumer Guide, which gives information about the Texas Rising Star program as well as national accreditation. A list of child care providers with TRS certification will be published on the CCA web portal as well as the TRS website.

Benefits of Texas Rising Star Certification

- Providers can receive higher reimbursement rates from CCA. The maximum rates for TRS providers are higher than for other providers, however CCA cannot reimburse at rates higher than the provider's published rates.
- Providers are eligible for incentives to help them meet TRS criteria and improve their quality, such as workshops, series-based training, equipment awards, and curriculum resources. Projects and funding amounts vary from year to year.
- Providers are eligible to receive referrals of children served through Child Protective Services. The CPS caseworkers work with the parents/guardians to choose high quality child care services.

Additional Training Requirements

Providers must participate in orientation provided by CCA on the procedures that are in this Provider Manual prior to enrolling in CCA. Existing providers may be required to attend the orientation as well as a refresher on program requirements.

CCA orientation and any training on CCA program policies and procedures **does not** count toward TDFPS minimum licensing standards requirements, and certificates will not be issued.

Important Contact Information

Child Care Assistance:

Phone: 214.630.5949

Web: cca.childcaregroup.org

Fax: 214.688.4436

Address:

1420 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 300

Dallas, TX 75247

Child Care Automated Attendance:

Provider Help Line: 1.866.320.8720

Website: www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com